



For more
information
on Everglades
restoration, visit:

www.evergladesplan.org
www.evergladesnow.org



Florida Department of
Environmental Protection
www.dep.state.fl.us



South Florida Water
Management District
www.sfwmd.gov

America's Treasure: Florida's "River of Grass"

STEPPING UP THE PACE TO RESTORE AMERICA'S EVERGLADES

The Everglades is a subtly beautiful ecosystem covering almost 3,500 square miles in South Florida. The nation's largest subtropical wetland, the Everglades are now half their original size, reduced over the past century by drainage and development.

A multi-decade, state-federal initiative is underway to protect and restore the remaining Everglades. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) will capture fresh water destined for the sea and use it to revitalize the wetland ecosystem. More than 60 complex projects make up CERP. Eight of the most critical restoration projects are being fast-tracked by the state to achieve benefits ahead of schedule. Known as **Acceler8**, these projects will play an important role in restoring America's Everglades.

THE LATEST ON ACCELER8. . .

Construction Underway for Reservoir and Treatment Wetlands

- A celebration event on February 24 recognized construction of the **C-43 Reservoir test cells**. Test cells provide valuable data on local seepage, embankment placement, grading techniques and other technical details needed for optimum final design of the full-scale reservoir, which will store up to 170,000 acre-feet of water. (See *Acceler8* benefits and project details below.)
- A groundbreaking ceremony on February 9 marked 3 Stormwater Treatment Area expansions: STA-2 by 2,000 acres, STA-6 by 1,400 acres and STA-5 by 2,560 acres. These and future expansions of the **Everglades Agricultural Area Stormwater Treatment Areas** will enhance performance of the existing stormwater treatment areas and reduce the discharge of phosphorus by 45 metric tons per year. (See *Acceler8* benefits and project details below.)

The State of Florida closes on more than 12,000 acres of land needed for *Acceler8* project

- This acquisition marked the final privately owned parcel needed for the **C-44 Reservoir & Stormwater Treatment Area** project. Martin County contributed \$27,422,857 toward this purchase. Of the 12,000 acres, 100 acres will become a public park. (See *Acceler8* benefits and project details below.)

Certificates of Participation to finance restoration projects

- On February 24, a state circuit court judge formally approved the plan to use Certificates of Participation (COPs) to finance *Acceler8* projects. Not only does approval for this revenue bonding make funds available now for construction, it is also the **first time in the nation that COPs will be used for environmental restoration**.

KEY ACCELER8 BENEFITS...and the Projects that Will Achieve Them**Improve Everglades water quality and quantity**

- The **Everglades Agricultural Area Stormwater Treatment Area Expansion** will significantly increase the treatment area of constructed wetlands, known as Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs). These wetlands cleanse stormwater runoff, preventing pollution from entering the Everglades.
- A multi-component project, known as the **Water Preserve Areas**, will provide above-ground impoundments and expanded wetland areas to divert urban runoff and improve hydropatterns in the Water Conservation Areas. This will also improve flows to Everglades National Park.

Reduce excess flows to east and west coast estuaries

- The **Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir** will provide significant additional water storage in the southern region of the EAA. This will store regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee, reducing the number/volume of harmful discharges to the coasts.
- The **C-43 (Caloosahatchee River) West Reservoir** will capture and store stormwater runoff from the local C-43 basin and from Lake Okeechobee releases, reducing flows into the Caloosahatchee Estuary. During dry conditions, the reservoir will provide sufficient flows for estuary health.
- The **C-44 (St. Lucie Canal) Reservoir & Stormwater Treatment Area** project will capture and treat local runoff from the C-44 basin in Martin County, decreasing flows and improving water quality into the St. Lucie Estuary. This project is part of the large-scale Indian River Lagoon restoration.

Increase the size and health of wetlands

- **Picayune Strand (Southern Golden Gate Estates) Restoration** restores natural water flow across 85 square miles in western Collier County. Threatened and endangered species such as the Florida panther and the red cockaded woodpecker will benefit.
- The **Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands** project will expand and restore the wetlands adjacent to Biscayne Bay, improving the shoreline and enhancing the ecological health of Biscayne National Park.
- The **C-111 Spreader Canal** is a multi-purpose project to restore freshwater and tidal wetlands and near-shore habitat in south Miami-Dade County. The spreader canal will provide more natural sheetflow of water, resulting in significant benefits to Florida Bay.

**ON THE HORIZON**

- **C-44 (St. Lucie) Reservoir and STA Test Cells:** Groundbreaking on Friday, March 24, 9:30 am.
- **Water Preserve Areas: Acme Basin B Discharge:** Upcoming groundbreaking, date to be announced

Public Outreach: Two construction symposiums & exhibitions were held to encourage local business participation in the *Acceler8* contracting process; six major public meetings have been held to gain input on *Acceler8* projects; workforce development and jobs training programs are in place.

Get Involved! Find out how you can help by visiting
Everglades Forever: <http://www.sfwmd.gov/site/index.php?id=512>